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Welcome

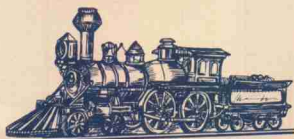
Henry Cowell Redwoods State Park is nestled in the forested coastal mountains just a few miles from the city of Santa Cruz. It is nearly 1800 acres of remarkable diversity... huge evergreen redwoods, lush stream canyons, open sunny meadows, pine and oak forests and high dry chaparral-covered ridges. Wildlife is plentiful, ranging from the commonly seen jays and squirrels to the more elusive owls and bobcats. It is also an area rich in human history. The Ohlone Indians lived here in quiet harmony with their surroundings for many thousands of years. The Spanish and Mexican periods left their marks on the land as did American pioneers such as Henry Cowell himself.

The Past... Who Was Henry Cowell?

A hundred years ago much of Santa Cruz County belonged to Henry Cowell. He and his brother came to California from Massachusetts in 1849, drawn by the lure of gold. However, instead of mining they established a successful drayage business in the San Francisco Bay area, hauling equipment and supplies to the mining towns in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada.

His wealth firmly assured, Cowell moved his family to Santa Cruz in 1865. Here he established a ranch on land which is now a campus of the University of California. He also diversified his business interests by acquiring local limestone operations. The quarried limestone was burned in stone kilns fired by wood. It took 325 tons of rock to fill a kiln and then 140 cords of wood burning over six days to reduce it to 150 tons of usable lime. Though the evidence of the industry in the Rincon area of the park is gone now, picturesque fern covered kilns can be seen in nearby Fall Creek.

By 1886 Cowell was reported to have the highest income in Santa Cruz County and owned 6,500 acres of prime land. This property included over 1600 acres of forest adjacent to Welch's Big Trees Resort.



The Railroad and Welch's Big Trees Resort

In 1875 an eight mile stretch of railroad was constructed from the town of Felton to Santa Cruz to facilitate the transport of lumber from the mountains to the coast for shipping. Soon this section was connected to a new line which climbed over the summit from San Jose. In addition to freight, the trains began to bring in thousands of tourists who were eager to see Santa Cruz's famous big trees and enjoy nearby sandy ocean beaches.

The most impressive grove of redwoods along the rail line was owned by Joseph Welch. To meet the demands of tourists he built a resort complete with cabins, dining hall and dance pavilion. Welch's Big Trees Resort was on the itinerary of nearly every visitor to the Santa Cruz area, including such famous dignitaries as presidents Benjamin Harrison and Theodore Roosevelt.

A County Park

Welch's grove was a prime asset to Santa Cruz County's growing tourist industry. When the Welch family gave indications that it wanted to sell the grove in the late 1920's the county became interested in its purchase. In 1930 William T. Jeter headed a movement to make the grove a county park and an agreement was made to purchase 120 acres. For the next 23 years Santa Cruz County Big Trees Park was enjoyed by thousands of visitors.

Next...A State Park

The county's property was nearly surrounded by acreage owned by the Cowell family. In 1953 Henry's son Samuel was the last remaining Cowell heir. Seeking a suitable monument to his pioneering father, he offered the state over 1600 acres of land as a gift with the stipulation that the county deed over its Big Trees Park to the state also. In August of 1954 Henry Cowell Redwoods State Park became a reality.



The Park Today

The park today is a unique combination of easy accessibility, comfortable facilities, an incomparable redwood grove and miles of hiking trails to more wild and remote areas. Year round camping is available on Graham Hill Road where a 112 unit campground features developed campsites with tables, fire rings, flush toilets and hot showers. The sites are suitable for tents or RV's although there are no hook-ups. Reservations are advised May through October. Call the park office, (408) 335-4598, for information.

The main entrance on Hwy. 9 leads to the picnic area and redwood grove. Situated along the San Lorenzo River amidst large sycamores and box elder trees, the picnic area has 260 sites each with a table, barbecue pit and shared water supply. A short trail leads to the redwood grove, Nature Center and the Environmental Education Center.

Located at the beginning of the redwood loop trail the Nature Center has exhibits on the natural and human history of the park. It is staffed by docents—trained volunteers—who happily answer questions about the park and surrounding area. There are live and prepared examples of park wildlife as well as exhibits on redwood ecology, plant communities, geology, Ohlone Indians, early day logging and other interesting topics.

Call 335-7077 or 335-4598 for Nature Center hours.

An Ecological Patchwork

Many distinct plant communities make up the park. Distribution is based on environmental factors such as topography, exposure, soil type, temperature and humidity. An appreciation for the Santa Cruz Mountains can be enhanced by exploring the area on the many riding and hiking trail.



The Redwood Forest

During the prehistoric times when dinosaurs roamed the earth, redwoods were widespread over much of the northern hemisphere. Over millennia climatic change reduced the redwood's habitat. Today these tallest trees in the world are found only along a 450 mile corridor stretching from southern Oregon to the southern limits of Monterey County. Even within this range, redwoods are restricted to moist fog shrouded stream canyons within 30 miles of the sea.

Redwoods have evolved with fire and are resistant to it thanks to a thick fibrous bark. The many fire scars seen on redwoods are the result of repeated persistent fires over hundreds of years, but still the trees continue to live. Some of the largest trees in the park's main redwood grove approach 300 feet in height and are perhaps as much as 1500 years old.

The easy, level .8 mile redwood loop trail circles through the park's largest trees. Specific plants and animals are associated with an original growth grove such as this. California bay, tanoak, big leaf maple and douglas fir are a redwood's companion trees. Assorted ferns, redwood sorrel, wild ginger and trillium provide the ground cover. Animals most commonly seen are jays, juncos, squirrels and chipmunks, though great horned owls, winter wrens, salamanders and banana slugs also make their homes among the redwoods.



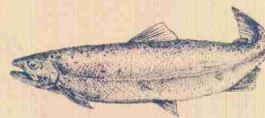
The Meadow

One of the most scenic landscapes is the meadow along the day use entrance road. During the wet months it is various shades of green sprinkled with color in the spring from the flowers of the California poppy, mustard and vetch. The grasses and flowers of the meadow provide an abundant food source for wildlife. Deer are commonly seen in the quiet of the early morning and evening. Ground squirrels, mice, moles and brush rabbits are the small furry creatures most often encountered. Mourning dove, quail, sparrows and swallows feed or nest here. In addition, snakes, lizards and predatory birds are attracted to the meadow because of the large number of insects, small mammals and birds upon which to feed.



A Special Note about Poison Oak

Poison oak flourishes throughout the Santa Cruz Mountains where it provides food and shelter for wildlife and aids in erosion control. It grows in the form of a bush or vine and when leaves are present they are in groups of three with lobed edges. In the autumn the leaves turn a beautiful red and fall off leaving bare stems. All parts of the plant produce an oil which causes a rash on most people. Learn to identify this plant and stay on designated trails in order to minimize exposure.



The Stream Canyon

The gently flowing San Lorenzo River in which children waded during the summer can be transformed into a raging torrent during heavy winter rains. Plants in the park's stream canyons must be able to withstand periodic flooding and the abrasive action of sand-laden water. Box elders, western sycamores, black cottonwoods and willows are suited for such conditions and they border the river as it flows over granite rock.

The San Lorenzo as well as Powder Mill Creek and Eagle Creek provide a source of water for park wildlife. Tracks along the stream banks indicate the presence of mammals such as opossum, raccoon and bobcat. Mallard ducks, herons and kingfishers are frequently seen feeding along the river.

The winter increase in water volume brings spawning runs of silver salmon and steelhead. The river is only open for fishing to those who possess a valid license during selected winter months which may change from year to year. Consult Fish and Game regulations for specific information.

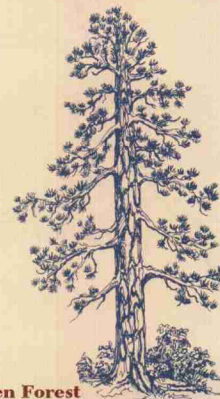
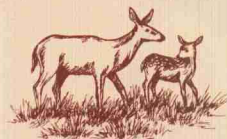


Chaparral

Although the park is located just a few miles from the ocean it reaches an elevation of 802 feet. The fascinating chaparral community is located on these higher exposed ridges. Sometimes known as the "Elfin Forest", shrubs here reach heights of only 3-8 feet.

These sun-loving plants are well adapted to living in a hot dry environment. The vertical fuzzy leaves of the manzanita minimize exposure to the drying rays of the sun. A waxy covering on the leaves of the scrub oak acts like a rubber glove to hold in moisture. The tiny resinous needle-like foliage of the chamise offers little surface to the sun while the shininess of yerba santa's leaves reflects the sun's rays. Any pine cones you find belong to the knobcone pine. Its seeds are an important food source for chaparral wildlife.

You may wonder how the animals in this community survive the heat. Although snakes and lizards aren't hesitant to venture forth on summer days, most of the chaparral animals are out during the cooler morning and evening hours. Look for the tracks of raccoon, bobcat, deer and coyote in the sand of the chaparral trails.



Mixed Evergreen Forest

Between the redwoods of the stream canyons and the chaparral of the ridge tops lies the mixed evergreen forest. Live oaks, madrones and an occasional buckeye are this community's broadleaf trees. Knobcone pines, douglas firs and ponderosa pines are the cone bearers. The ponderosa pine here deserve special attention. This is the most unusual tree species in the park.

Ponderosa pines normally grow in the Sierra Nevada above 3,000 feet. It is quite extraordinary to find them so close to the ocean and at such a low elevation. The campground is a good place to see large ponderosa pines and the rest of the mixed evergreen species.

Wildlife is plentiful in this community especially along its margins. Native gray squirrels and eastern fox squirrels busily gather pine nuts and acorns. Woodrats, coyotes and bobcats are also occasionally seen. Common birds here are steller's jays, scrub jays, robins, juncos, chickadees, towhees, acorn woodpeckers, quail and thrashers.

MOUNTAIN PARKS FOUNDATION

525 N. Big Trees Park Road
Felton, CA 95018
(408) 335-3174

Mountain Parks Foundation (formerly Santa Cruz Mountains Natural History Association), has been funding educational and interpretive activities in the Santa Cruz mountains state parks since 1973.

In cooperation with the California State Park System, the Foundation publishes and distributes park literature; sells books, maps and park brochures; purchases equipment and supplies for interpretive programs in the parks; funds exhibits, educational seminars, children's summer day camp, and special events for park visitors; and operates the Environmental Education Center in Henry Cowell Redwoods State Park.

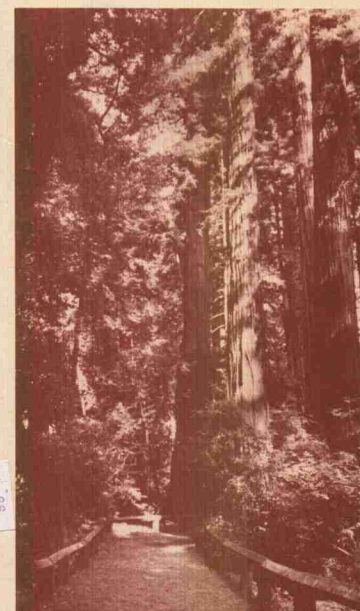
Membership in the Foundation is open to all who are interested.

For more information, call or write:
MOUNTAIN PARKS FOUNDATION
525 N. Big Trees Park Road
Felton, CA 95018
(408) 335-3174

Mountain Parks Foundation is a tax exempt 501(c)(3) organization. Donations to the Foundation are tax deductible.

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HENRY COWELL
REDWOODS
State Park



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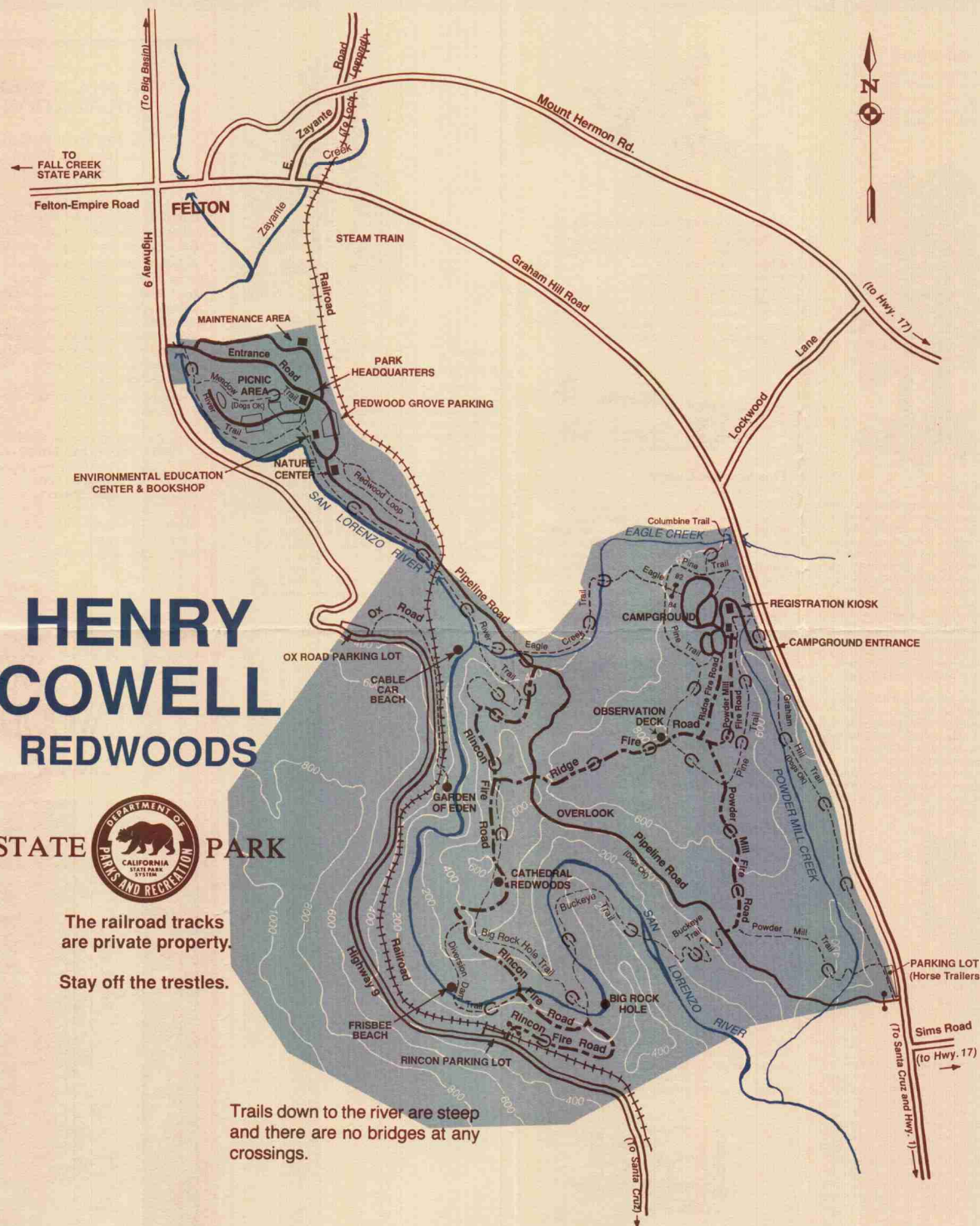
HENRY COWELL REDWOODS



The railroad tracks are private property.

Stay off the trestles.

Trails down to the river are steep and there are no bridges at any crossings.



Trails of Henry Cowell

Henry Cowell State Park has approximately 20 miles of trails. The type of terrain and trail lengths vary. Remember, trails down to the river are steep and there are no bridges at any of the crossings.

Redwood Grove Trail An easy 0.8 mi. wide, flat, wheelchair accessible loop around the giant redwoods. Self-guided brochures are available.

Eagle Creek Trail The most direct route from the campground down to the San Lorenzo River is this 1.0 mi. long, hilly trail that begins between campsites 82 and 84 and drops down to cross Pipeline Road before converging with the River Trail.

River Trail From the park entrance on Hwy. 9 this trail parallels the San Lorenzo River for 1.6 mi. of easy hiking before it climbs toward the Rincon Trail.

Trails to the Observation Deck The Highest point in the park offers a view of Santa Cruz and the Monterey Bay and is most quickly reached from the campground by way of the Pine Trail between campsites #47 and #49 (0.4 mi.).

Ox Road Trail Provides access down to the picturesque Garden of Eden about 3/4 of a mile from the first Hwy. 9 parking lot south of the main entrance.

Graham Hill Trail Beginning at the campground entrance campers can walk 1.4 miles along this easy, level trail to reach the nearest store.

Rincon Fire Road Starting from the parking lot 3 miles south of the main entrance on Hwy. 9 this trail drops down to the San Lorenzo River gorge and more remote sections of the park.

Buckeye Trail Descends steeply for 0.5 mi. from its origin on Pipeline before fording the San Lorenzo River and winding along the riverbed.

Powder Mill Fire Road From the campfire center this Fire Road ascends for 0.4 mi. before it drops down gradually to meet Pipeline Road.

Pipeline Road Dogs on a leash may accompany their owners on this 3.3 mi. long paved road that extends uphill from the picnic area to an overlook of Santa Cruz and then drops down to Graham Hill Road across from the convenience store.

LEGEND

CONTOUR INTERVAL: 200 FEET

SCALE IN KILOMETERS

0 .2 .4 .6 .8 1.0 1.2 1.4 1.6

0 .2 .4 .6 .8 1.0

SCALE IN MILES



Highway



Paved Road



Dirt Road



Trail



Horse Trail



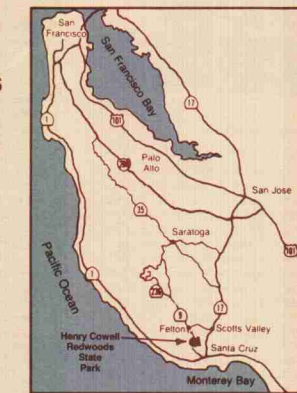
Locked Gate



Creeks



Contours



We Need Your Cooperation

To protect the natural beauty of the park and to provide all visitors with a safe and enjoyable experience, please observe the following rules:

- ★ Due to fire hazard, fires are permitted only in the designated firepits or stoves provided and no smoking is allowed on the trails.
- ★ All park features are protected and therefore any collection is prohibited. Down wood is needed to replenish nutrients to the soil and may not be gathered for campfires. For your convenience wood may be purchased at the campground.
- ★ Day use hours are from sunrise to sunset. Camping is only permitted in designated areas. Quiet hours are from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m. Generators may be operated between the hours of 10 a.m. and 8 p.m.



- ★ Bicycles are permitted on designated paved & fire roads. Bicycles are not allowed on anything labeled "trail". Bicyclists under 18 must wear a helmet.
- ★ Feeding of all wildlife is prohibited.
- ★ Dogs are welcome in the park but must be on a leash at all times and kept in your car or tent at night. They are not allowed on interior trail nor may they be left unattended.
- ★ Recycle! Barrels are located throughout the park.



For further information, please contact the park headquarters staff:

Henry Cowell Redwoods State Park
101 North Big Trees Park Road
Felton, CA 95018

(408) 335-4598 Office

(408) 438-2396 Campground

(408) 429-2850 District Headquarters

(408) 335-7077 Nature Center